

RODRIGO TOSCANO

What's Latino/a about Latina/o Culture & Arts in 2014?

In what ways might I consider myself a Latino artist/writer?

What's blue about blue? That's one way to talk about things. Tautological perhaps, but a frontal approach *can* yield expedient results to the quandary: *what's blue about blue*. But also, what's blue about red? I mean the actual colors—not a metaphor (review spectrographic phenomenon, exercise extrapolative logic). And then, what's red about purple? I'm talking about wholly different (fuzzy-scalar) approaches to *vis* ability. But now, the most paradoxical and imperative thing to ask is *what's purple about purple?* What, specifically is *not* Latino about Latino Arts & Culture. Something portends here, *algo molesta*. I think it says that today, here, many would reach to be *lime green*, hauling buckets of black certainty from the white well of doubt. Pink speckles on the face so that we know you're not *all-extrusion all-the-time*. Peachy.

In what ways do they consider themselves to be Latino/Latina poets?

1. They have to *want* to speak to Latino/Latinas. Check.
2. They would have to figure out (by way of a cultural-material sly subjective probabilistic calculus) what the “American” component to “Latin American” is pointing to? Check?
3. A significant number of people from different Latin cultures, nations, social stations, would have to implicate all these folks seated here as “Latin American.” Does *that* check?
4. They would have to identify with the High Hagggle of *Where American Poetry Now* as it intersects with *Latin-American Poetry Of The Very Next Minute From Now*—while, withstanding the 101 intrigues that go into “formulating” the very proposition. Check.
5. A significant paper & cyber “trail” would have to be splayed for someone to “examine,” a kind of *mancha* that says, “here lived an Latin American artist.” Check.

Do I believe there is anything specifically Latino/a (American) about L. American poetry past and present? Is there a L. American poetry in the sense that there is said to be L. American painting or L. American film?

Right now, national “cultural matters” are in such a state of agitation that [pause, note: recessions *create* highly catalytic social organisms, we ought to be on the alert for those] - that, it's really hard to accurately pin point historical vectors of cultural ascent, or reverse-descent, as it would be. I might end up in Latino Lit Purgatorio for suggesting an epithermal crisis in this very room, but—to be sure, as a thin-membraned recessionary pathogen—*con seis cuernos*—I submit there's not such thing as L. American Poetry.

But let's for a moment help raise an AWP neo-Hegelian barn "A State of The Nation" for American Latin Poetics (ALP). In the stream-of-happening, ALP's (quote) "time-honored" struggle *with* and subsequent dysmorphocataphobic *union* between the individual & nation—is emergent. And tectonic economic-cultural shifts being massive as they are, there's a definite sense *and* push for a (quote) "future."

In a manner of speaking, where are the Latino Tea Party Poets? Are there any? And to be dialectically even more thorough here—are we them? As *anti*-Tea Party *forces*, here, we end up attending to the dysmorphocataphobic sub-national asymmetric power relations—*all at once*. What does it mean to be "Latina/Latino Experimental?" *Doctoresque*.

What role do historical and geographical factors play in Latina/o poetry and in your work specifically? What other aspects of your life (for instance: gender, sexual preference, class, ethnicity, religious beliefs) relate to your sense of being an L. poet in America?

Cholla mesa-and-canyon Pacific Ocean breeziness cut with brick-n-mortar Brooklyn Glitter Brawn Border Cruelture Mod meets Anti- Recht und Ordnung Global *Libertas*—Add: Catholic-Atheist Syndicalist Urban Spork Slash Poet Back Slash *Junion Organiser* Dramaturgue Slacker *Mortificado*.

Is there something formally distinctive about Latino/a poetry?

Yes, all the red-brown marble pillars have little bits of key lime peel in them. Concentrate. Taste it.

Toda esta piedra por aqui se derrite tan pronto que te acuestes en ella.

Please pronoun me, *doctores*.

What significance does popular culture possess in your sense of Latino/Latina-American poetry?

A poetry without Jazz rhythm sense, a poetry without Folk Song heart, or Blues understanding, or Hip Hop jump-speak, or Heavy Metal pathos, or Techno feel for pulse n' spatiality, un corrido sin cuento, una fabula sin fabulosidad, etc. We know it when we hear calculatedly *non*-popular poetics: the "can't combine" the "can't mix" – is bad enough, but the *ni tiene ganas* – is a stuck shift key on a blank spreadsheet.

When you consider your own "tradition," do you think of L. American poets? Which historic poets do you consider most responsible for generating distinctly L. American poetics?

Doctores is a stickler for wide-angle Greater American (from point Barrow, Alaska to Patagonia, Argentina) views. *Doctores* thinks that sapling L. Poets ought to digest *every* major tradition and sub-tradition of "Greater American" Poetry – none excepted. In addition to this ideal-impossible prescription, *doctores* thinks saplings ought to learn as

many languages as possible and read poetries in those different languages. Aren't global-regional poets transmitters party crashers, *gorrones* from complex of multiple social locations? American Latin Poetics, is like a promissory note that's worth at least *one* "it's bound to happen." It usually doesn't, but it's necessary *and* significant: *politilobos*—on the loose.

Doctores—is resistant to list off the big game-changers in terms of A.L. poetics right here, right now (re: canonic endeavors). And yet, *doctores* doesn't really think of ALP as an amoebic movement of the millions. But here's *doctores* now, about to take on a whole new role as cultural taxonomist. *Doctores*, says, I need my latina fantasmas *as* fantasmas, meandering, in mitosis. Marble busts don't flirt with the eyes. Mouths made of flesh sometimes burp up rocks while kissing.

What are your predictions for L. American poetry in the next century?

There will be a deep, and largely misunderstood cultural antagonism between Trans-Migratory imaginations and Tiered-National imaginations. At times, "progressive" politics will make use of the Tiered-National dimension; at other times "regressive" politics will make use of the Trans-Migratory dimension. ALP will be bestowed the task of calculating specific "cultural- technical" *tweaking* to those epic tensions. ALP-ers might embrace the task as manna from the Hegemon as subaltern treasure hunts "off the page" (*of* the page), that is, sprightly movements of the done-that / might-do-better *immediate past*.

Latino/Latina Poetic Activity of a *different* sort will get wise to this *arreglo*, and perhaps assert a new kind of fluctuative set of positive responses to the situation. Seductive traps set up by so-called "ownership society" will be disarmed. Senile affect-constructs like "sincerity," "authenticity" as well as hedge-betting constructs like "irony" and "snark," will come of as even more quaint than they do today. New forms of untrained body-sensation will be coupled to semantic utterance. Words will re-catalyze, and as Paolo Freire said, they'll "find the path by walking". Will we keep pace? Right now, despite how thunderously loud the surround of Experimental Writing has become, American Latin Poetics is muffled, stifled, almost beyond sensibility.

La Observadora

Feeling the initial jolts of an explosive, subterranean social transformation is something that she lives for, especially when the jolts are perceived to erupt from nearly frozen bystanders' warm, pulsating bodies.

First, their emotions brighten to a maximum luminosity, spectacular accidents in thought causing intention to splinter into multiple paths of action; next, their ideals deflate and tuck hard against actual lived conditions; after that, their sense of public vanity dissipates, a scattering plume of smoke to nowhere; finally, their dogged dedication to reason clamps its

straining claws into a rapidly unfolding speculative science of a just-around-corner “reality.”

The jolts come in a series of flickering dream images, sending waves of recovered historical memory into her sense of The Now.

She adores this new “little demon” friend more than anything else in the world. The feeling is mutual.